

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 217375 TOSEC 250052

61

ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY NEA:ARLAY:TH

APPROVED BY NEA:ADUBS

M:LSEAGLEBURGER

S/S: SESTEINER

S: D. PASSAGE

----- 078384

O 020204Z SEP 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 217375 TOSEC 250052

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, IS

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM: ISRAELI HARASSMENT OF AMOCO
IN THE GULF OF SUEZ (S/S NO.7618532)

1. THE PROBLEM:

OUR CONTINUING PROBLEM WITH ISRAELI HARASSMENT OF AMOCO EX-
PLORATION AND DRILLING OPERATIONS IN THE GULF OF SUEZ LED
TO A FURTHER INCIDENT ON AUGUST 31 WHEN AMOCO REMOVED ITS
DRILLING RIG FROM SITE 304-1 UNDER THREAT OF ISRAELI
MILITARY ACTION. AS IN THE PAST, THE EGYPTIANS AND AMOCO
LOOK TO US FOR SUPPORT IN PROTECTING THE AMOCO OPERATION
AND, AS IN THE PAST AS WELL, OUR PROBLEM IS TO INDUCE THE
ISRAELIS TO PERMIT THE OPERATION TO PROCEED.

2. DISCUSSION:

-- HILE THE ACCOUNTS OF THE AUGUST 31 INCIDENT DIFFER (AND
WE DO NOT ACCEPT EITHER ACCOUNT AT FACE VALUE), IT IS CLEAR
SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 217375 TOSEC 250052

THAT THE ISRAELIS FORCED THE AMOCO DRILLING RIG TO LEAVE
THE SITE BY THREATENING IT WITH A GUNBOAT. IN HANDLING THE

INCIDENT, OUR AIM AND

EXPECTATION WAS THAT, IF THE ISRAELIS PERSISTED IN THEIR

THREATS, THE AMERICAN CREWMEN COULD BE EVACUATED BUT THE DRILLING RIG WOULD REMAIN IN PLACE. AMOCO HAD INFORMED US IT COULD NOT MOVE THE RIG IN ANY CASE AND WE HAD TOLD THE AMOCO OFFICE IN THE U.S. THAT WE WERE NOT SUGGESTING THAT THEY ATTEMPT TO MOVE THE RIG. AMOCO HAD MISINFORMED US ON THIS POINT, HOWEVER, AND DID IN FACT PULL THE RIG OUT OF THE AREA AS THE ISRAELIS THREATENED WITH GUNBOATS AND, REPORTEDLY, HELICOPTERS. THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT THE ISRAELIS HAVE USED THREATS OF FORCE AGAINST AMOCO. ON ONE PAST OCCASION THEY PUT AN ARMED MILITARY MAN ON AN AMOCO EXPLORATION VESSEL WHO THREATENED THE CREW WITH HIS MACHINE GUN.

3. THE ISSUE IN THE GULF REVOLVES AROUND ISRAELI CLAIMS TO JURISDICTION OUT TO A MEDIAN LINE. YOU HAVE WITH YOU A MEMORANDUM (S/S NO. 7617990) THAT DESCRIBES THE BACK-GROUND AND THE LEGAL SITUATION. WE SUPPORT AMOCO'S RIGHT TO DRILL ON THE SITE, ALTHOUGH THE LEGAL CASE IS NOT UNAMBIGUOUS. THE PRACTICAL PROBLEM IS THAT OF INDUCING THE ISRAELIS TO ALLOW AMOCO TO EXPLORE AND DRILL. THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAS TOLD US THAT IT DOES NOT WISH TO WEAKEN ITS POSITION CONCERNING THE MEDIAN LINE BY ALLOWING THIS OPERATION. OUR HIGH-LEVEL DEMARCHES TO THE ISRAELIS HAVE HAD NO EFFECT. MEANWHILE, THE EGYPTIANS HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY EXASPERATED WITH THE ISRAELIS AND WITH US AND LOOK TO US FOR FIRM ACTION AGAINST ISRAEL. YOU HAVE OWED FAHMY A RESPONSE TO AN EARLIER MESSAGE FROM HIM ON THIS SUBJECT IN ANY EVENT, AND A DRAFT REPLY IS AT ATTACHMENT 2 FOR YOUR APPROVAL.

4. OPTIONS:

WE DO NOT HAVE MANY REALISTIC OPTIONS IN DEALING WITH THE ISRAELIS. THERE IS PRESUMABLY NO POINT IN CONSIDERING MAJOR WITHHOLDING OF AID OR OTHER MEASURES THAT WOULD
SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 217375 TOSEC 250052

RAISE THE WHOLE ISSUE OF OUR RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. SENDING IN A U.S. NAVAL VESSEL PRESUMABLY FALLS IN THE SAME CATEGORY. WE COULD CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING, HOWEVER:

-- A FURTHER STRONG DEMARCHE FROM YOU TO RABIN THROUGH DINITZ OR TOON, DEMANDING THAT THE AMERICAN FIRM BE PERMITTED TO OPERATE ITS LEGAL CONCESSION AND SUGGESTING THAT THE ISRAELIS COULD DO THIS WHILE STILL MAINTAINING THEIR CLAIM TO JURISDICTION OUT TO THE MEDIAN LINE (TALKING POINTS ARE AT ATTACHMENT 1). THIS SHOULD PRESUMABLY BE DONE IN ANY CASE.

-- WITHHOLD COOPERATION WITH ISRAEL ON ISSUES OF A SCALE

REASONABLY COMMENSURATE WITH THE QUESTION INVOLVED. ONE

MINOR POSSIBILITY WOULD BE TO REFUSE TO CONTINUE THE JOINT PLANNING FOR EMERGENCY OIL SUPPLY WHICH THE ISRAELIS SEEM SO ANXIOUS TO UNDERTAKE. WE WILL TRY TO IDENTIFY FURTHER POSSIBILITIES.

-- BRING TO PUBLIC ATTENTION THIS HIGHHANDED ISRAELI INTERFERENCE WITH AN AMERICAN FIRM. THERE HAS BEEN NO PRESS ATTENTION SO FAR, AND THE COMPANY SEEMS DISINCLINED TO BRING IT TO PUBLIC ATTENTION ITSELF. EXPOSURE TO THE PUBLIC WOULD AROUSE SOME AMERICAN RESENTMENT AGAINST ISRAEL BUT WOULD PRESUMABLY MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE ISRAELIS TO ACCEPT THE COMPROMISE FORMULA WE ARE SUGGESTING, (ALTHOUGH THEIR TRACK RECORD TO DATE DOES NOT GIVE MUCH GROUNDS FOR BELIEF THAT THE ISRAELIS WILL ACCEPT ANY COMPROMISE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES).

-- TELL THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT THAT, IN THE LIGHT OF THE AUGUST 31 INCIDENT, WE WILL NO LONGER CAUTION RESTRAINT ON THEIR PART AND CONSIDER THAT THE ONLY WAY TO COPE WITH THE PROBLEM IS PROBABLY TO FORCE A SHOWDOWN. THE DIFFICULTY HERE IS THE SAME WE FACED ON AUGUST 31, NAMELY THAT ANY SHOWDOWN BY THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI MILITARY UNITS WOULD FIND AMERICAN CIVILIANS IN THE MIDDLE. WE CAN NOT INSIST THAT THE AMERICANS PLAY SUCH A ROLE, AND IF THEY WISH TO ESCAPE FROM IT WE ARE REALLY BOUND TO HELP THEM DO SO. FURTHERMORE, AS AMOCO TELLS US, THE
SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 217375 TOSEC 250052

CAPTAIN OF THE DRILL RIG CANNOT BE ORDERED TO REMAIN ON THE SCENE AND WOULD LIKELY LEAVE IN ANY FUTURE INCIDENT, AS HE DID AUGUST 31.

5. RECOMMENDATION:

-- THAT YOU APPROVE THE TALKING POINTS AT ATTACHMENT 1.
APPROVE.....DISAPPROVE.....

YOU WILL USE WITH DINITZ.....TOON TO USE.....

-- THAT WE HOLD OFF ON COMMENCING THE OIL SUPPLY PLANNING TALKS WHILE WE SORT OUT THE GULF PROBLEM.
APPROVE.....DISAPPROVE.....

-- AND THAT YOU APPROVE THE MESSAGE TO FAHMY AT ATTACHMENT 2.

ATTACHMENT 1 - TALKING POINTS:

-- I HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING THE SITUATION REGARDING AMOCO'S OPERATIONS IN THE GULF OF SUEZ WITH INCREASING CONCERN.

THE INCIDENT ON AUGUST 31, REGARDLESS OF WHO WAS RIGHT

ABOUT THE DETAILS, CLEARLY INVOLVED THE THREAT OF ISRAELI
FORCE AGAINST A LEGITIMATE AMERICAN DRILLING OPERATION.

-- THE UNITED STATES CANNOT ACCEPT THAT AMOCO WILL BE
PREVENTED FROM DRILLING IN A SITE TO WHICH IT HAS AN
UNCONTESTED RIGHT AND WHICH WE FEEL IS OUTSIDE LEGITIMATE
ISRAELI JURISDICTION. WE WILL CONTINUE IN OUR EFFORTS
TO PROTECT AMOCO'S OPERATION, THEREFORE.

-- THERE IS NO POINT IN ENDEAVORING TO SOLVE THE LEGAL
POSITION BETWEEN US. WE MUST DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM AS
A POLITICAL ISSUE THAT OUGHT TO BE SOLUBLE ON THAT BASIS
BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES THAT HAVE THE RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE.

-- WE ARE NOT ASKING THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL TO CHANGE
ITS POSITION REGARDING THE MEDIAN LINE, EVEN THOUGH WE
DISAGREE WITH IT, BUT ONLY TO PERMIT AN AMERICAN FLAG
SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 217375 TOSEC 250052

VESSEL, OPERATED BY AN AMERICAN COMPANY, TO OPERATE IN
THAT AREA. ISRAEL CAN COMPLETELY RESERVE ITS POSITION
ON THE LEGAL ISSUE AND WE WILL NOT COOPERATE IN ANY
ATTEMPT TO PORTRAY THE AMOCO DRILLING AS EVIDENCE THAT
THE AREA LIES OUTSIDE ISRAELI JURISDICTION. IT IS QUITE
POSSIBLE FOR AN OCCUPYING POWER TO PERMIT COMMERCIAL
ACTIVITIES TO GO ON AND TO RESPECT VALID CONCESSIONS.
IN FACT, IT IS QUITE NORMAL UNLESS THEY THREATEN THE
SECURITY OF THE OCCUPATION. FURTHER SUCH INCIDENTS,
WHICH WILL SURELY OCCUR IF THE SITUATION IS NOT CORRECTED,
WILL ONLY EXACERBATE U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS. THIS WILL
BE PARTICULARLY THE CASE IF THE INCIDENTS BECOME PUBLIC,
AS THEY LIKELY WILL AT SOME POINT. ISRAELI PERSISTENCE
IN INTERFERENCE WILL CREATE A CONFRONTATION WE SINCERELY
WISH TO AVOID.

-- I WOULD THEREFORE APPRECIATE URGENTLY ISRAEL'S ASSUR-
ANCE THAT AMOCO'S OPERATION WILL NOT BE INTERFERED WITH
BY ISRAELI NAVAL VESSELS.

ATTACHMENT 2 - TELEGRAM TO CAIRO IMMEDIATE

SECRET/EXDIS

TAGS: PFOR, US, IS

SUBJECT: AMOCO OPERATIONS IN GULF OF SUEZ--MESSAGE TO
FAHMY

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY:

1. PLEASE CONVEY THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM ME TO FAHMY.
2. BEGIN TEXT:

-- I WAS DISTRESSED, AS I KNOW YOU WERE, BY THE FURTHER

ISRAELI HARASSMENT OF AMOCO OPERATIONS ON AUGUST 31. AS YOU KNOW, WE HAD CONVEYED A FIRM WARNING TO THE ISRAELIS NOT TO USE FORCE ON THAT OCCASION AND, FOLLOWING THE INCIDENT, I PROTESTED STRONGLY TO THEM ABOUT IT.

-- OUR MOST IMMEDIATE CONCERN, OF COURSE, WAS TO AVOID THE JEOPARDY OF AMERICAN CITIZENS. WHATEVER THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF THE CASE, WE CONSIDERED THAT WE HAD TO
SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 217375 TOSEC 250052

SUPPORT THE EVIDENT DESIRE OF THE AMERICAN CIVILIANS INVOLVED TO PROTECT THEMSELVES BY LEAVING THE SITE BEFORE AN INCIDENT MIGHT HAVE OCCURRED BETWEEN THE ISRAELIS AND THE EGYPTIAN GUNBOATS THAT WE UNDERSTOOD THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT WAS SENDING. SO FAR AS THE DRILLING VESSEL ITSELF WAS CONCERNED, WE HAD NO CONTROL OVER IT, AND THE CAPTAIN MADE HIS OWN DECISION TO LEAVE IN THE FACE OF ISRAELI THREATS.

-- THIS ISSUE OF JURISDICTION IN THE GULF HAS OF COURSE EXISTED FOR SOME TIME, AND WE HAVE MADE OUR DISAGREEMENT WITH THE ISRAELI POSITION KNOWN TO THE ISRAELIS ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION. WE HAVE TOLD THE ISRAELIS THAT OUR VIEW CONCERNING THE SO-CALLED MEDIAN LINE DIFFERS FROM THEIRS AND THAT WE BELIEVE AMOCO IS WELL WITHIN ITS RIGHTS TO CONDUCT THE PLANNED OPERATION IN THAT LOCATION. OUR LAWYERS TELL US THAT THE LEGAL SITUATION IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR, AND THIS WILL OF COURSE INCREASE THE DIFFICULTY OF OBTAINING A SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. WE ARE NEVERTHELESS CONTINUING TO PRESS THE ISRAELIS STRONGLY TO CEASE THEIR INTERFERENCE WITH AMOCO AND TO PERMIT THE OPERATION TO GO FORWARD.

-- I WILL KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOU ON THIS QUESTION AS DEVELOPMENTS MAY INDICATE, THOUGH AS YOU KNOW I WILL BE AWAY IN EUROPE AND PROBABLY AFRICA FOR A WEEK OR TWO. I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN THE UNITED STATES SHORTLY AFTER MY RETURN.

-- WITH WARM REGARDS, HENRY A. KISSINGER. END TEXT.

A,PROVE DISAPPROVE

DRAFTED BY: NEA:ARDAY
APPROVED BY: NEA:ADUBS
CLEARANCES: M: LSEAGLEBURGER; S:DPASSAGE
ROBINSON

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 16 SEP 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, HARASSMENT, EXPLORATORY DRILLING, OFFSHORE OIL FIELDS
Control Number: S7618532
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE217375
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA:ARLAY:TH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D760332-0872
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197609108/baaaepyf.tel
Line Count: 270
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUN 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <06 OCT 2004 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ACTION MEMORANDUM: ISRAELI HARASSMENT OF AMOCO
TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, US, IS, AMOCO
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006